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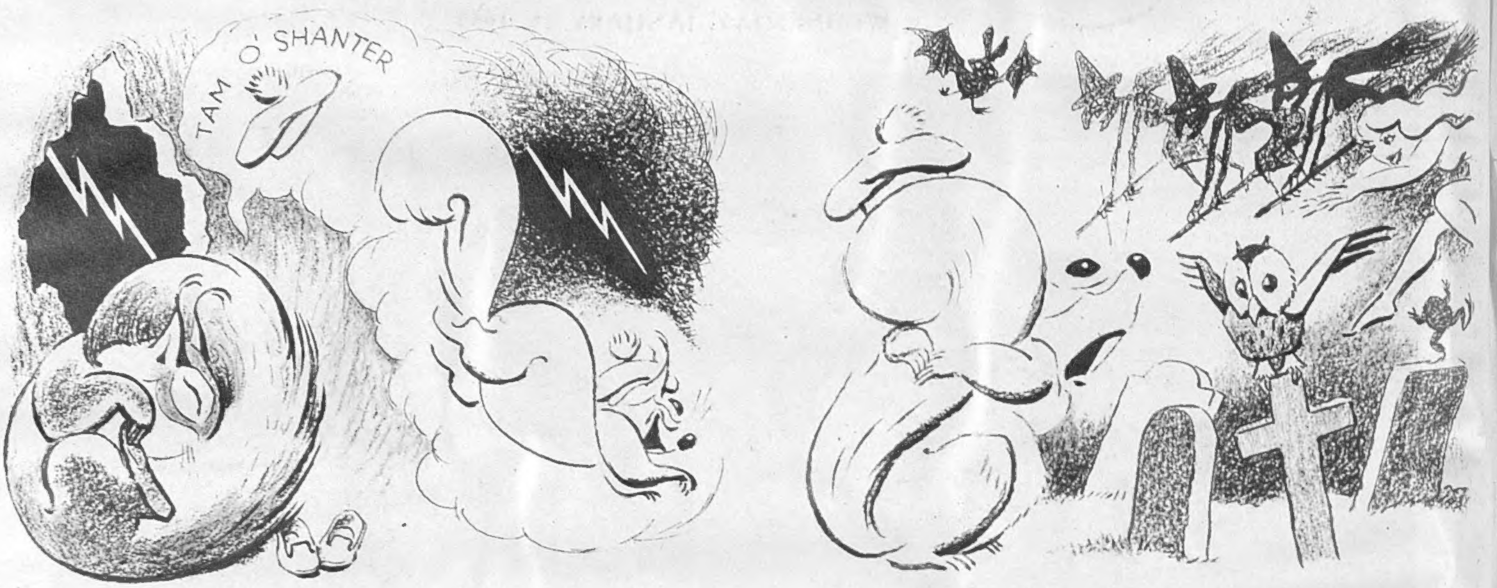
The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1953

WEDDING GUESTS

The Queen and Princess Margaret arriving at St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, for the wedding of the Earl of Dalkeith to Miss Jane McNeill on January 10. Her Majesty wore a charming flare-skirted coat in the fashionable new French purple, decorated with velvet frogging, while Princess Margaret's ensemble of velvet coat and dainty petal hat was in a rich shade of mole. Two pages of pictures of the wedding appear on pages 46-47.

"BUSHY'S" BURNS' NIGHT DREAM: By HARGRAVE



Our Motley Notes

By Toby O'Brien

It is perhaps fortunate for the Foreign Office that that great pro-consul, the late Lord Lloyd, is no longer with us. He was never one, at moments when he considered that this country was displaying weakness, to feel it his duty to withhold criticism, and that criticism was pungent and pointed, leaving no doubt in the mind of the recipient as to his displeasure.

Lloyd stories are innumerable, but one which gave him most pleasure is, I feel sure, not known to the public. He told it to me when dining alone with my wife and myself just before he became ill. "You know, my dears, the only thing that I am really proud of in my mis-spent career?" he asked. "It was the decoration of the harlot of Assiut."

The story, as I recall it, was that shortly after he became High Commissioner in Egypt, which was not long after the murder of Sir Lee Stack, the Sirdar, a detachment of British troops, whose arms were in the guard's van so as not to be "provocative," were stopped by a howling mob in the station at Assiut, dragged from the train, and butchered, with all the normal Oriental accompaniments.

Through this mob there came flying the local harlot, wearing the black silk dress and black jet beads of her office. She gave the crowd the raw edge of her tongue, found two of these boys who were still living, looked after one until he died, and took the other to her house and nursed him until help arrived.

When Lord Lloyd heard about this, he obtained for her the grant of the M.B.E., ordered a Durbar of all the local sheikhs, and presented her with her decoration, and also a house to live in out of his own pocket for the rest of her days. He had, however, omitted to inform the Government at home of the normal means of livelihood of this daughter of Rahab.

"You can imagine, my dears, how the virguncules of the Foreign Office hated me for it—but you can also imagine that this story is still told wherever there is a bazaar in the Middle East." I feel sure it was. For he had that rare mixture of public firmness, personal friendliness and *panache* which so appeals to the Oriental mind.

One story which I have often heard told about him is completely apocryphal. This was that one day his A.D.C., when they were returning from a drive, said to the Lord as he went up the steps of the Residency (as it then was): "Will you want the car any more this afternoon, Sir?" To which the Lord said: "No."

The young man, thinking that he had gone on into the Residency, came half-way down the steps and said: "God says he won't be wanting his chariot any more to-day"; to be congealed by that metallic voice saying: "No. And God won't be wanting his A.D.C. any more after to-day." The story then went on to say that he had him packed off to England straight away.

I tackled the Lord about this, and asked him if the story was true. He chuckled, and said: "No—but I can tell you who made it up!"

He was a delightful, if hard, taskmaster. The bureaucratic found him, however, a trifle disconcerting. I remember when he became Colonial Secretary—that office which had been for the thirty-five years since Joe Chamberlain either a stepping-stone for young men in a hurry, or a convenient political field into which decrepit politicians could be turned out to grass for the last few years of their political life.

In either case there was no desire to do anything so disturbing as take a decision and the Civil Servants who worked under political chiefs of this type naturally evolved into the most admirable species of Abominable No-men that ever endangered a great Imperial heritage.

On one occasion, one of Lord Lloyd's high-ups came in to see him and said: "Excuse me, Secretary of State, but what do you mean by the word 'soon'?" To which the Lord replied: "Quarter of an hour, half an hour, perhaps an hour. If it is very complicated, perhaps twenty-four hours. Why do you ask?" "Oh, well you see, Lord Lloyd, some of the senior

officials were thinking perhaps two or three weeks." "Disabuse their minds," came the reply, "of that comfortable and lethargic misapprehension."

THE spate of verbatim "inside stories" of what took place during Mr. Churchill's recent visit to General Eisenhower is a tribute to the ingenuity of American Pressmen, if perhaps not so desirable a reflection on the discretion of Mr. Churchill's hosts. Of course, no one will ever come up to the French Press at this sort of thing, the fertile Gallic imagination supplying many a gap that might otherwise remain unfilled.

I recall my own pre-war definition of the various types of meeting of the League of Nations: A *public* meeting of the League was one at which nobody knew what had happened until the official communiqué was issued an hour later; a *private* meeting was one at which nobody knew what had happened until half an hour later; and a *secret* meeting was one at which nobody knew what had happened at all except the French journalists—and they knew half an hour before!

During the Abdication crisis my favourite reading consisted of the French tabloid weeklies, such as *Gringoire* and, particularly, *Aux Écoutes*. *Aux Écoutes* could be forgiven much of its scurrility for its admirable

adaptation of the title of Alfred de Musset's famous play, "*On ne Badine pas Avec l'Amour.*" The Abdication crisis, they said, was due to the fact that "*On ne Baldwin pas avec l'amour.*"

The most dramatic pieces of *Aux Écoute's* inside reporting were the pages devoted to the last few days of the Abdication. Apparently—for the interchanges were given verbatim—this enterprising journal had succeeded in concealing a reporter behind every sofa and under every table at Fort Belvedere. The most dramatic scene as reported was at the final dinner-party, at which the King, accompanied by his brothers, had his last meeting with Baldwin.

According to *Aux Écoutes*, at one stage the Duke of Kent was so incensed by something that the Prime Minister said that he made as if to strike him. King Edward VIII restrained him, but, a little later: "*Alors le Roi posa la main sur l'épaule de son jeune frère.* 'Thank you, Kent,' *fit-il*"—a brotherly gesture which has long lived happily in my memory.

THE world of fashion is, to say the least of it, outside my ken. I am incapable, as I once said at a fashion show at which I was induced to make a speech, of distinguishing "a placket from a gusset"—a phrase which was suggested to me by a young lady of my acquaintance, and I am not quite clear yet why there appeared to be almost inordinate laughter!

Recently, however, I had occasion to see off to Spain a party which included the gorgeous Miss Anne Gunning. She is, I am told, one of Britain's top models. Certainly she is of a beauty calculated to disturb the even tenor of the thought, and make the heart go pitter-patter, of any middle-aged gent.

These photogenic young ladies must lead pretty strenuous lives, and I am told by an expert informant that ten years is a long working life, and about six the average. Their short professional lives are made shorter if they are gay ones—and probably the only one in which the phrase "keeping the wolf from the door" has an other than financial significance!

I HAVE made a discovery—rather, it has been made for me by an old friend, Mrs. James Brennan, who sent me for Christmas from Seattle a small paper-covered book called *Academe—a Book of Characters*, by Glenn Huges. I opened it a little idly, but have now found that a new thing has come into my life. I feel a little like stout Cortez, or perhaps as I felt after having read my first James Thurber short story. This book has apparently been privately printed, as a result of the patronage of a number of friends of the author, including Mrs. Brennan, and is to be obtained at the "University of Washington Bookstall, Seattle."

This series of American academic "characters" is printed in the style of *Archie and Mehitabel*—plus the wit of Thurber and the admirable sonorous balance of an eighteenth-century epitaph. Perhaps American readers, who are kind enough to write to me from time to time, or English friends in the United States, can tell me who this splendid man is? In the meanwhile, my blessings on Nané Brennan.

One of the comic-tragedies in the book is that of Mr. Paul Higgs, the Dean of this imaginary University, who unfortunately, in his forty-seventh year, goes to Europe, becomes enamoured of European ways, and particularly of European *expertise* in the matter of wines and alcohol generally.

He is so rash as to conceive of a grandiose plan to teach the students a proper civilised approach to the question of drink. Unfortunately, the campus newspaper gets hold of this:

> The city seethed with controversy for at least a week,
> During which time ministers preached against Higgs and his diabolical proposal,
> Parent-teacher associations passed resolutions of condemnation,
> Editorial writers stayed sober long enough to join the parade of the outraged,
> And no voice of importance was raised in defense of the dean of men.

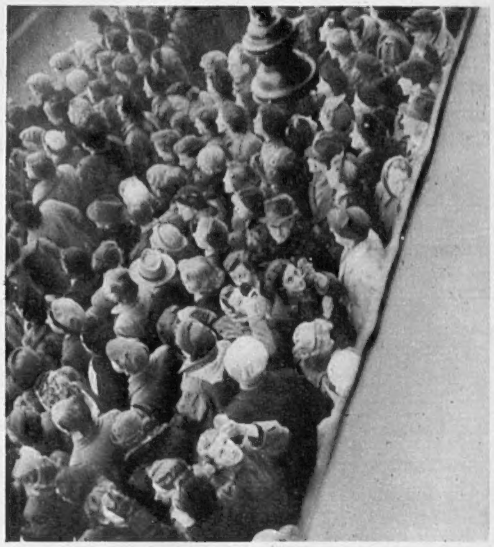
As I contemplate the ignorance of some wine waiters here in London, I feel that there could well be a place in this country for a crusade of the type which Mr. Higgs had in mind. The number of times one is given corked wine, or, as happened to me the other day, a wine of the same Château, but ten years younger than the one ordered, by the wine waiter, who said: "Sorry, sir, we didn't think you would mind the difference," is far too frequent.

Of course, in many cases it is due, as Dr. Johnson, on one famous occasion said, to "ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance." The dwindling proportion of waiters from wine-growing countries has something to do with this, but I blame restaurateurs for not insisting that their wine waiters, and, indeed, waiters who might be trained up to that position, should taste the lees of the various wines they serve.

The only way of acquiring a knowledge of wines is by constant comparison one with another. The standard of waiting generally has not recovered since the war. One famous restaurateur told me recently that one of his English waiters when asked what sauces went with a particular dish, replied: "We have got all sauces, from A1, Worcester, Tomato, etc."; and another one, when a customer asked for Peach Melba, replied: "Yes, sir, ice-cream with it?"; which is to be matched by his colleague who, when asked for *Consommé en gelée* replied: "Yes, sir, 'ot or cold?"

Toby O'Brien

In a beautiful crinoline dress of white French lace patterned to match the mayflower design of her diamond tiara, and re-embroidered with silver thread, Miss Jane McNeill arrives at St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, for her wedding to the Earl of Dalkeith.



Police estimate that 50,000 people thronged the streets near St. Giles'. Here, some of the crowd use mirrors to watch the bride arrive.

The 1600 guests at the reception included 1000 tenants and employees from the Duke of Buccleuch's estates.

A charming picture of bride and groom as they leave St. Giles' after the ceremony.

The Earl of Dalkeith marries Miss Jane McNeill

The wedding of the Earl of Dalkeith to Miss Jane McNeill at St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, on January 10 was a grand, colourful, historic affair. The Queen was present—the first reigning Sovereign to attend a wedding in the Cathedral since Mary Queen of Scots—and thousands came to catch a glimpse of the most talked-off wedding of the day.

Strangely enough, in the next issue of *The Sketch*—our Diamond Jubilee Number—we shall recall the most-talked-of wedding of January 1893—that of the then Earl of Dalkeith to the Hon. Margaret Bridgeman. And there are remarkable similarities: both bridegrooms had served in the Royal Navy; both brides chose deep pink for their going-away dresses

The Queen and Princess Margaret pose with, back row, *l. to r.*, the Duke of Buccleuch, Mrs. John McNeill, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, the bridal pair, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duchess of Buccleuch, Mr. John Synge and Mr. John McNeill. The child attendants, *l. to r.*, are Lady Caroline Percy, Prince Richard of Gloucester, Miss Cherry Cairns, Master Alastair Bruce, Lady Victoria Percy, Master William Legge, the Hon. David Ward, Master Michael Farquhar, Miss Jean Scott and Master David Scott.

A big day for a little girl. Lady Caroline Percy, one of the train-bearers, arrives for the wedding.

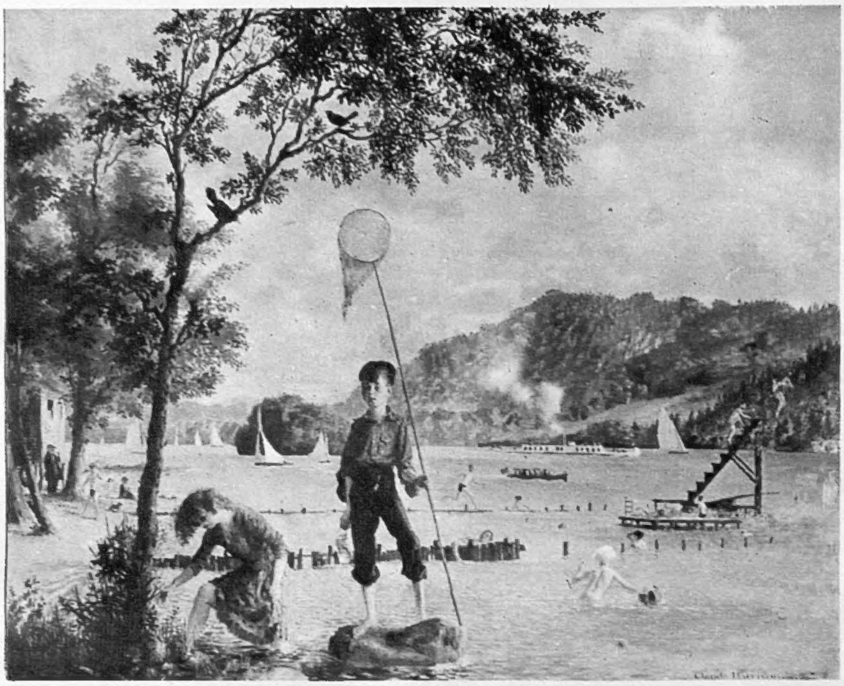
A piper chats with Miss Cherry Cairns, a bridesmaid, and Master David Scott, one of the pages.

The cake has been cut, and the radiant bride and groom reply to a toast.

At St. Florintin, Corsica, the cameraman snaps the honeymoon couple in an unguarded moment as a boatman waits to take them for a row.

It was the legend of the Goblin Page, told by the wife of the fourth Duke to Sir Walter Scott, clansman of the Buccleuchs, which inspired the "Lay of the Last Minstrel." We feel the charming old song, chanted by Albert Graeme, is as suited to the lovely young Countess of to-day as to the lady for whom it was written :

"It was an English ladye bright
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For love will still be lord of all."



The Bathers, by Claude Harrison.

Still Life, by Patricia Woodthorpe.

The Crucifixion of Indifference, by Michael Blaker.

Street Scene in Italy, by C. Heather Williamson.

ARTISTS UNDER 30

The Artists Under Thirty Exhibition at the R.B.A. Galleries until February 5, contains the nucleus of the New School of London. These five pictures are a fairly representative cross-section of the high standard of work of these young artists—work of great diversity, representing seventy-nine exhibitors, and, for the main part, of a remarkable force and competence.

In a departure from usual procedure, the organisers allowed the selected artists to choose those of their own works that they themselves considered to be their best and most progressive, assuring them that size or individual treatment would not exclude them from the Exhibition.

St. George and the Dragon and the Fair Maiden, by Colin Dudley.

"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE"

Through the years playgoers have tended to forget that Antonio and not Shylock is the merchant of the title—for Shakespeare himself quite evidently fell a victim to the rich Jew's spell. And as Shylock in the current Old Vic production, Paul Rogers dominates the play with an astonishingly vivid performance—a Shylock who makes us writhe in loathing one minute, yet draws our willing sympathy when he totters from the court after Portia's forensic triumph.

The romance of the gallant Bassanio and the rich young heiress is shadowed, but not spoiled, by the crossed wills of Antonio and the Jew. Cheerfully we succumb to the charms of the lovely Portia—for Irene Worth is the prettiest, cleverest, merriest Portia one could wish for. Hers is a considerable achievement in a wide field of emotions, from her nervousness and passionate anxiety as she watches Bassanio choose between the caskets—and how closely her tears sit upon her smiles when he chooses rightly!—to her inflexible and eloquent assurance as the advocate in a convincing trial scene.

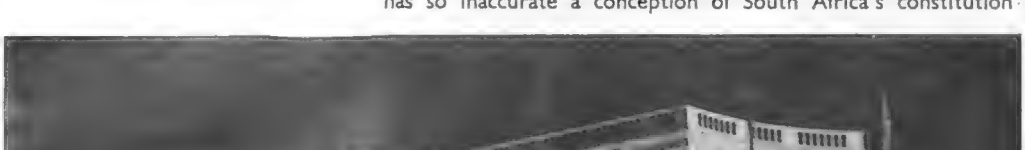
This highly successful production is a triumph for producer Hugh Hunt, whose infinite skill and ingenuity never appear forced.

Photographed by Angus McBean.

Irene Worth as *Portia*.

Paul Rogers as *Shylock*.

The High Commissioner for South Africa, a descendant of German farmers who settled in South Africa in 1760, seated in his study at the official residence. Dr. Geyer's main task here, he says, is not with the British Government so much as the public, "which has so inaccurate a conception of South Africa's constitution and problems."



A striking picture of South Africa House by night. This imposing building, "home from home" to thousands of visitors from South Africa, on the east side of Trafalgar Square, is equally well known to Londoners.

The World's Envoys to the Court of Queen Elizabeth

2.—DR. ALBERTUS LOURENS GEYER

(High Commissioner for South Africa)

FEW envoys accredited to the Court of Queen Elizabeth have a more delicate task than the studious, tall historian who is High Commissioner of the Union of South Africa, his Excellency Dr. Albertus Lourens Geyer. For the doyen of the Dominions envoys in London, assisted by a staff of 200, represents a Government whose policy of *Apartheid*, "separateness" of the various races, is not endorsed widely in Great Britain. Yet Dr. Geyer, for twenty-one years editor of the leading Afrikaans daily, *Die Burger*, is personally popular here, the most tactful choice the septuagenarian Dr. Malan could have made. One-time teacher, he secured an arts degree at Rhodes University College, Grahamstown, and a Doctorate in Philosophy ("cum laude") from Berlin. In 1920, aged twenty-six, he occupied the chair of history at Stellenbosch University.

In 1945 Dr. Geyer assumed additional editorial posts, and in 1949 accompanied Dr. Malan to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London. The electoral success of the Nationalist Party in

Mrs. Geyer proudly displaying some of the family heirlooms dating back for two-and-a-half centuries.

Here Mrs. Geyer is seen inside her loom "putting on the warp" in preparation for weaving a scarf. She finds the work restful after a busy day's correspondence.

Dr. Geyer, who is a celebrated botanist, recently gave his famous collection of succulents to the University of Stellenbosch. Here he examines some plants which have just reached him.

One of the three German maidservants arranges the breakfast table. The flowers, grown from bulbs flown over from South Africa, are chincherinchees, which grow wild on the veldt.

1948 is generally ascribed to the influence wielded throughout the country by Dr. Geyer's newspaper.

Relations between Dr. Geyer and the British Government are cordial. British trade with South Africa is highly important—our exports in a recent year totalled £113,964,181, and we imported to the value of £57,811,763 (minus gold). South Africa's phenomenal wealth may be gauged by the fact that her production of gold until 1951 was valued at £3,132,456,286, and of diamonds in 1951 alone at £411,036,053.

Methodical, gentle-voiced Dr. Geyer suggests that some expressed views on *Apartheid* are based on ignorance of elementary facts. For instance, the 2·6 million whites (40 per cent. descendants of Britons) include (like Mrs. Geyer) the progeny of Huguenots who settled in 1688 and Dutch folk who had arrived in 1652; these are, similarly with the 8·3 million Bantu, colonists. He says, "The Bantu have rights to their South African homeland, and the whites also have rights to what is equally their homeland." He frankly agrees, "We do not claim everything in our country in relation to the Bantu is as it should be—far from it."

Have the Negroes anything to thank the whites for in South Africa? Dr. Geyer says the white man's arrival has ended the barbarous tribal wars which at times literally decimated the population of large areas.

The anxiety of the Nationalists to retain white supremacy dates back to the victory on December 16, 1838. A Zulu king had earlier treacherously massacred about sixty whites during a dance following a treaty-signing ceremony; then 200 waiting women and children settlers were massacred. The Europeans gathered their forces, and 400 attacked 12,000 Zulus, leaving 3000 dead. The whites themselves suffered two injured.

Dr. Geyer is busy with many problems. Not least with the Coronation preparations. South African police, mounted on their famous bays, will guard the Union's representative, heading a procession of Army, Navy and Air detachments. Whatever views may be held in London on *Apartheid*, certain it is that personally the former editor and his competent lady are warmly welcome in the heart of the Empire.

OUR BOOKSHELF

INVISIBLE MAN. By Ralph Ellison. (*Gollancz* ; 15s.)
THE FAIR BRIDE. By Bruce Marshall. (*Constable* ; 12s. 6d.)
THE ROAD BACK. By B. Montagu Scott. (*Hutchinson* ; 10s. 6d.)
HAROLD LASKI. By Kingsley Martin. (*Gollancz* ; 21s.)

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

I HOPE it may be a good omen that the first novel I read in the New Year is a very good one—*Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison. The publishers mention Kafka in the blurb, and in the first and last chapters there is a suggestion of twisted fantasy and obscure symbolism which seem to me both pointless and irrelevant to the fine, vigorous and significant story which lies between. With a rush of eloquence, with a real though exuberant sense of style, the author describes the life of a young Negro, first in the Southern States, then at a College for Negroes, finally in Harlem. It is an unforgettable story, full of dramatic incident, free from mawkishness or self-pity, horribly credible, intensely moving. There have been plenty of novels which seek to arouse sympathy or indignation by showing the American attitude to Negroes ; this, by simply telling a story, will achieve far more. An early scene in which a number of coloured boys are blindfolded and pushed into a boxing ring to provide after-dinner entertainment for " all of the town's big shots " would read like a piece of propaganda but for the author's blessed gift of making the reader know that it happened. The College and its wily president, the Bostonian Founder who comes to visit it and the young Negro's expulsion are all just as believable. Work in a paint factory follows and then the Brotherhood—or as the reader may choose to think—the Communist party. Here the young man, who still keeps a touching faith in the rightness of things, who still hopes to realise honest and natural ambitions, is exploited and betrayed by people for whom his problem is only part of an academic scheme of life. All this gives little idea of the red-hot brilliance of this book, its passionate anger forged into narrative, its power and eloquence. Mr. Ellison even convinces one that the crudity of his language, which goes to lengths I have not seen before in print, is natural and necessary.

THERE should, I sometimes think, be posted at the headquarters of the Pen Club or the Society of Authors or at other literary huddling places, a warning to English novelists to keep away from Spain. It seems quite fatal to them. Not that such a warning would have saved Mr. Bruce Marshall from writing *The Fair Bride*, for one senses in it his confidence that he, at least, understands the Peninsula and its people. If he does, he has failed to show it in this book, which is a distorted and rather disgusting story of torture and bloodshed during the Civil War. A priest who has lost his faith is entrusted by his Bishop with a relic of St. John of the Cross. He hands it to another priest who, like the Bishop, is tortured and killed. He is befriended by a prostitute and her sister, arrested by the Communists, for whom he works for a time. The relic returns to him and with it his faith. He is prepared to die for this, suffers and sees more tortures and is saved from physical death by the arrival of Franco's forces. The town rejoices at its capture by the Nationalists, though prices rise. Everybody goes to a bullfight, " although the cost of watching animals tortured had gone up too." In fact, I felt as I finished the story, the whole book is rather torture and not only for its characters.

A CURIOUS, chaotic but highly readable novel is *The Road Back*, by B. Montagu Scott. It is, we learn from the dust-jacket, the story of Matt Robb, " adventurer and one-time leader of an international gang of jewel thieves,"

OUR DIAMOND JUBILEE

*ON the First of February, 1893, the bookstalls of London and the Provinces displayed a gay new publication whose title was—and still is—*The Sketch.

On the first page of this, our first number, in an article introducing itself to the public, there appear these words :

" Some humorist has suggested that *The Sketch* is a deep-laid plot against the peace and complacency of the *Illustrated London News*. There is matricide in the bare idea : but the *News* is much too old a bird to launch upon the world a fledgeling with a thankless bill to turn and rend the nest which gave it birth. . . . While our venerable parent pursues her stately flight down the broad avenues of public life, we shall hunt and illustrate that slippery worm, the popular whim, in all its haunts."

In the intervening sixty years, no rending of nests has been perpetrated—or indeed attempted! The Sketch *has pursued its own more darting flight down the side turnings devoted to the gayer side of life, and is still vigorously pursuing, catching and exhibiting to the public those elusive offspring of the original prey.*

To celebrate these sixty years of happy existence, we propose to publish, on February 11, a Diamond Jubilee Number, in which for a brief moment the hunt will be called off and the editorial pack will return to the hunting-grounds of 1893 to recapture the atmosphere of the gay 'nineties.

Contributors, going back in spirit to the scenes of that year, will comment on such occasions as the first performance of The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, *with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the lead ; deal with the potentialities of rising novelists such as Thomas Hardy and Robert Louis Stevenson ; describe a cosy dining-out occasion with a multi-course meal at a total cost of a shilling or so ; report on the hazardous undertaking of a road test of an 1893 automobile—a test somewhat handicapped by the presence of the compulsory man with the red flag walking in front ; comment on burning questions in the world of sport ; and describe the dernier cri in fashions of the day.*

These are but a few of the features of this Special Number, which will reflect the humour, art, news and personalities of the period in illustrations reproduced from the 1893 volumes of The Sketch. *For the older reader this issue will revive many happy memories ; for the younger it will bring to life one of the happiest periods of the nineteenth century.*

* *There will be a heavy demand for this Special Number, and to make sure of a copy our readers would be wise to ask their newsagent or bookstall manager to reserve them a copy now.*

" THE SKETCH "

DIAMOND JUBILEE NUMBER

On sale Wednesday, February 11th, price 2s.

yet in the first half of the book he does not appear—indeed is scarcely mentioned. When we do meet him in Montreal we are disappointed to find no jewel thieves, but a pleasant Scotsman bent on giving away his money. A manse family is scattered, and one daughter, Gail, finds her two sisters, while her brother, Matt, finds in turn his two brothers. Yet two more brothers, Dufty and Dio, who are promised us, failed to materialise. But the four people discovered are all made real. Polly, who has become the purse-conscious chatelaine of a Scots castle ; Lucia, a successful playwright, with a Chelsea flat; Alexander " Killer," who is now a famous surgeon, and Mark, Matt's twin, a priest, who chose to be sent to a lepers' colony and die, all four are very ably presented. Matt's own story, rather hurriedly told at the end, describes his marriage to a limp French-Canadian girl, and his return to Scotland with his son after her death. It all sounds a bit of a muddle, but there is a fresh and persuasive quality in this writer's work which enables her to attract and hold the reader's interest. Moreover she has neither the gushing sentimentality nor the would-be hard-boiled brutality which usually show up in novels about successful men from poor backgrounds.

FRANTIC efforts seem to have been made by Mr. Kingsley Martin to make the subject of his biography, *Harold Laski*, appear to the reader interesting and amiable, but he does not succeed in making this anything but what it was, perhaps, foredoomed to be—a dull book about a dull man. Biographers often bring their subjects to life by revealing their small weaknesses and human foibles, but when Mr. Martin attempts this with " Harold " and shows him telling intimate, but inaccurate, anecdotes about " all the Great and Good of our day," it does little to relieve the monotone inherent in the portrait. " When I was dining at Haldane's last night, Asquith got off a beautiful thing about Curzon . . ." is quoted as a typical opening to such anecdotes and makes the reader feel uncomfortable rather than friendly. The book is informative on the vicissitudes of the Labour Party during the last thirty years, but at the end of it we see only dimly an earnest, rather humourless, self-conscious man who knew a great many facts but learnt little from experience, who had a wide acquaintance but seems to one who meets him first in this book, to have been a bloodless though conscientious theoretician.

YOUR LIBRARY LIST

MIDSUMMER MEADOW.
By John Moore. (*Collins* ; 10s. 6d.)

LOVE'S A MAN OF WAR.
By Violet Dean. (*Gollancz* ; 12s. 6d.)

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By Filippo Ferraro. (*Falcon Press* ; 12s. 6d.)

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By Maurice Edelman. (*Wingate* ; 10s. 6d.)

COTILLION.
By Georgette Heyer. (*Heinemann* ; 12s. 6d.)
Another of this author's excellent Regency stories.

ENTER A PLAYER.
By Hilda Lewis. (*Macdonald* ; 10s. 6d.)
Novel of the theatre in the days of George Edwardes.

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By A. Jacques. (*Kaye* ; 25s.)
This authoritative book goes from the elementary to the advanced. Many of its 200 photographs by Roger Lyon are superb.

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By S. F. Hallgarten. (*Paul Elek* ; 21s.)
A very welcome reprint of a delightful book. It is a guide both to German wines and the country in which they are grown.

THOMAS CARLYLE : LETTERS TO HIS WIFE.
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The editor of *Jane Welsh Carlyle : A New Selection of Her Letters* has worked with as much scholarship, accuracy and good taste to produce this companion volume of the several hundred letters of Carlyle's which had remained unpublished.

LADIES' CHAIN.
By Neville Blackburne. (*Falcon Press* ; 21s.)
Studies in eighteenth-century womanhood designed to show how the more adventurous spirits of the time, like Lady Melbourne, Mrs. Crewe and Lady Blessington, made possible careers in the nineteenth century like those of Florence Nightingale and Mrs. Pankhurst.

Photographed by Studio Lisa.

HAPPY FAMILY

This charming picture of our Royal Family in the grounds of Balmoral, which has only just been released for publication, provides an informal contrast to the forthcoming pomp and circumstance of the Coronation ceremony.

c

★ AT THE THEATRE ★

with J. C. TREWIN

The Merchant of Venice

(Old Vic)

I DO not suppose it is the thing for a critic to quote his own occasional verse. But I take the liberty in considering the Old Vic revival of *The Merchant*. No play of Shakespeare has been more kicked around, more abused by old-fashioned, comma-conscious pedagogues—

Ink clogs each casket ; the whole piece is planned
As a portentous exercise . . . ;

and by both critics who have grown weary of watching it, and producers (Komisarjevsky and Terence Gray, for example), who have tried to paint the lily, imagining that playgoers find it as dull as they do :

The bore Bassanio's romantic chatter ;
Shylock in frenzy ; the strict court of Venice ;
Blest pair of Gobbos, whose pernicious patter
Is like a tedious set of table-tennis.

We all know—or should know—at heart, that *The Merchant*, however it is acted, can never fail. It is a ridiculous story ; once we begin to examine it, we go around shaking our heads over Shakespeare's carelessness. How could the man inflict it upon us ? How could he ? Yet

It is for ever
A play that wins us from its curtain-rise :
Fled are our doubts : the Belmont story
We watch with other eyes :
Its wisdom gleams, its music and its wit :
Now Portia's house to us is Colchos' strond,
And we the Jasons come in quest of it.

So it is at the Old Vic where, from curtain-rise, the house is rapt, even though (we have to admit) there have been performances more exciting, a Shylock at once fuller and more flexible than Paul Rogers (an actor of strong intelligence), a Portia less consciously gay than Irene Worth (who mounts suddenly in the second half of the evening), and a Bassanio more romantic than Robert Urquhart. I am in two minds also about Roger Furse's settings : not the Canaletto-Venice, which is rightly summoning, but the stone pavilion used for Portia's Belmont. I do not think so much about its rising-and-falling, though this begins to weary just as Komisarjevsky's lift-work did at Stratford twenty years ago. It is the look of the thing : an austere setting for the casket scenes. And what are we to say about its cold stone at the last when the moonlight should be sleeping upon the bank ?—

" *On such a night*
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand."
Dido of Carthage : spare yourself confusion ;
Consult the Notes,
Read the small print, my boy.
Those careful glosses on the Sack of Troy.

Never mind. (Let us escape quickly from the cry that " when Burbage played the stage was bare . . ."). Say what we will, *The Merchant* must take the heart. Hugh Hunt, who knows all about it, has brought it carefully to the Vic ; and whatever we may think of Miss Worth and Mr. Rogers in earlier passages, there is no doubt about their response to the Trial Scene. This is so driven home that, even if we have seen the play fifty times and read it fifty more, we have still to hold our breath when Shylock raises the knife against Antonio. Douglas Campbell has the true Antonio-manner, which means that he does not turn the fellow into a melancholy owl. There are some good minor performances, Jane Wenham's Nerissa, Claire Bloom's Jessica and the Gobbos of Newton Blick and Kenneth Connor, who rattle the bones of the old jest. The last scene, the affair of the rings, is acted and spoken enchantingly by all concerned :

No more the play for me
Is overset by old solemnity :
The trifling tale, as it is nobly told,
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.

Let us leave it there.

In a scene from *Escapade*, stage husband and wife Nigel Patrick and Phyllis Calvert indulge in a " scene " all their own.

Escapade

(St. James's)

THIS is one of the strangest plays I have met for some time. The first-night audience cheered it : even when the house-lights went up, applause continued hopefully for two or three minutes. But what was the cheering for ? The acting, yes. There had been several apt performances, especially by Phyllis Calvert, Edith Sharpe, Ernest Clark, and the boy, Lance Secretan. Nigel Patrick, too, put a good face upon a part that made little use of his charm.

But the play ? The cheering was for this also. Roger MacDougall, we know, has a highly original mind, and many of his views—on parents and children, on education, on the clear-mindedness of the young and the aged—were much to the fancy of the house. The piece tingles with ideas, but as an example of craftsmanship it is rickety. It begins as comedy, it strays into farce, and it ends as a play with a message (or several messages). Superficially, it is about a celebrated author and militant pacifist, whose sixteen-year-old son seems likely to be more successful at both jobs. Whereas Father can neither manage his own home nor his author's peace manifesto, his son can write a brief and lucid document of his own and get the school to sign it. Further, to show that there is no cowardice behind his opinions, he borrows an aircraft illicitly, and flies off to Venice and a conference of U.N.O. As the Fleet Street man, who takes a hand in the affair, says wisely, Icarus—for that, if you can believe it (I can't), is the boy's name—knows much better than his parents how to make his message front-page news.

I cannot help feeling that the useful Icarus would have taught Mr. MacDougall a thing or two about play-writing. Although the play keeps the mind—for no one could call it a two-a-penny, stencil-cut affair—it also keeps one irritated (or, as the author's wife insists on saying, " aggravated ") by its frequent gear-changes. Mr. MacDougall writes self-consciously : he seems to be listening to himself, to be patting his own shoulder and whispering, " Dab in a bit of the message here." His mind has a Shavian tinge ; but Shaw, at Mr. MacDougall's age, would have managed the business more artfully. This may appear to be ungrateful. New plays as aspiring as this do not crop up every week, and there is much in *Escapade* to argue about when the night is over. Some hold that we should have seen Icarus and his brothers ; no doubt that would have been an anti-climax. We do see a good many other people, including five who barely flicker upon the stage. Mr. MacDougall is as wasteful with people as with ideas. I regretted particularly the waste of Michael Aldridge in a larger but baffling part, that of an amiable French-horn player who has been in love with the mother of Icarus : he kept on reminding me of " Waffles " in *Uncle Vanya*, but throughout the play I found myself catching these vague and probably unreasonable likenesses.

Miss Calvert's determination, Miss Sharpe's good sense, and Mr. Clark's decision, in a part that wavered between a highly polished Squeers and what some might call an Integrated Educationalist, all helped considerably. I did not believe in Mr. MacDougall's view of Fleet Street, though Hugh Griffith worked hard on his behalf ; and I could not credit the militant pacifist (with the grand old name of John Hampden) for whom Nigel Patrick did his highly-professional best. Lance Secretan and Alec McCowen were first-rate as a pair of schoolboys, of whom the younger had the more plausible part, though the elder found a nice line : " The world 's full of old blokes signing bits of paper ; and that doesn't get us very far, does it ? " This might have been the principal message ; still, take your choice.

PRESENT AND FUTURE

HENRY SHEREK has four new plays in preparation. *The Uninvited Guest*, written by Mary Hayley Bell and directed by John Fernald, has John Mills, Joan Greenwood and Cathleen Nesbitt in the leading parts : it opens at Southsea on February 16 and comes to London in mid-April. Next are Lionel Shapiro's *The Bridge* (seen already at the Bristol Old Vic), which will have a new cast for London ; and *All in the Family*, adapted from the Parisian " thriller," *Tapage Nocturne*. Last is T. S. Eliot's *The Confidential Clerk*, which begins at the Edinburgh Festival on August 25 and reaches London after visits to Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool.

SHAW AND COWARD

Noël Coward, at present in Jamaica, will never have had so testing a part as that of King Magnus, which he is to act in a Coronation summer revival of Shaw's political comedy, *The Apple Cart*. It opens in the West End during the first week in May. Margaret Leighton will be the Orinthia in this Tennent production. (The parts were created by Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Dame Edith Evans.)

ROYAL EXCHANGE

Bernard Miles will be taking his Mermaid Theatre from St. John's Wood to the Royal Exchange for a season that lasts from May 4 to July 25. Shakespeare is represented by *As You Like It* and *Macbeth* ; Kirsten Flagstad sings in *Dido and Aeneas* ; and the City will also have—most reasonably—the revival of a City comedy, *Eastward Ho !*, by John Marston, Ben Jonson, and George Chapman. Staged first at Blackfriars in 1605, this is the tale of a goldsmith's daughter nearly ruined by her unscrupulous husband.

MISS DONLAN

Yolande Donlan's next part will be with Naunton Wayne in a farcical comedy, by Val Guest, called *The Lady Steps Out*. It has been written for her especially, and Charles Hickman produces it in March for a tour before London production at Easter. Jack de Leon presents it in association with John Wildberg.

GETTING AROUND

The Breadwinner will open its revival to-night at the Arts. . . . A new American play, called *The Five Philadelphia Physicians*, has its Embassy première on February 25. . . . *The Glorious Days*, with Anna Neagle, comes to the Palace on February 28 : more later. . . . Lord Vivian is to revive the Farjeons' Victorian comedy, *The Two Bouquets*. . . . Hugh Sinclair has taken over the leading part in *The Little Hut* (past its 1000th performance at the Lyric). . . . Joan Newell has followed Rosalie Crutchley in *Murder Mistaken* (Vaudeville) : Miss Crutchley succeeds Pamela Brown (who goes to the Gielgud company) in *The River Line*, at the Strand.

From "Peter Arno's Sizzling Platter."

"FILL 'ER UP."

Series reproduced by courtesy of "The New Yorker."

Le Lac des Cygnes

The current production of the exquisite *Le Lac des Cygnes*, at Covent Garden, is easily the most satisfactory presentation in the Sadler's Wells repertoire. First produced by Nicholas Sergeyev, the ballet has been revised by Ninette de Valois, who has enlarged the *corps de ballet* and put her own stamp of genius on the production. Leslie Hurry's décor is of a striking beauty and the entire ballet is sumptuously mounted in excellent taste.

The mellow autumn colouring of the opening scene and the glowing richness of the ballroom of the mediæval Court in Act III., bring into sharp contrast the luminous enchantment of the two lakeside scenes.

Young as she is, Rowena Jackson, who alternates with Beryl Grey and Nadia Nerina in the rôle of Odette-Odile, has proved herself worthy of her promotion from solo dancer to *prima ballerina*. She is partnered very successfully by Michael Somes, and their teamwork is of the same quality as that of Beryl Grey and John Field, Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine.

As one of the Swan Leaders, Svetlana Beriosova dances with supreme authority and great beauty of line and movement, and Alfred Rodrigues is most impressive as the wicked magician, Baron von Rothbart. The production has run itself in now and goes smoothly with an easy precision which is a constant joy to the audiences which continue to crowd the magnificent Royal Opera House.

Photographed by Baron.

SPORTING BACKGROUND

by Louis T. Stanley

I OFTEN think that the paddock at a race meeting has been devised for horses to study the habits of human beings. If the animals have powers of reflection I can imagine an equine cynicism that to create man was a fine and original idea, but to add sheep was a tautology. I could add others . . . bookies, for instance! Generally speaking, there is nothing wrong with these gentlemen . . . nothing that a miracle couldn't cure; though, when I think of the number of bookies whom I know have gone to a better world, I am moved to lead a different life. On second thoughts, it would have to include a sphere in which horses shall run and the laying of odds allowed a sinless occupation. It must include people like a couple I met recently on a racecourse. The man had a handshake that could have been used as a tourniquet. His wife was typical of a type seen at every meeting. She was certainly an optimist when it came to picking winners. She had a remarkable instinct about things. She could discover anything except the obvious, particularly when that object had to win a race. I enjoyed their company, if only to appreciate that faith is an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable. Having backed four consecutive losers, they left me with a cast-iron certainty for the Grand National. For the benefit of any reader who was kicked on the head by a mule when young, and believes everything he reads in the Sunday papers, I will murmur that the horse named was *Saladin II*. If its fate is similar to their tips at this Grand National Trial, I hope that its life during the next few weeks will be pleasant.

Only once have I backed a Grand National winner . . . that was in 1951. It was similar to the 1928 race when *Tipperary Tim* was the only horse not to fall. *Billy Barton*, the only other to finish, was remounted. In 1951 thirty-six horses came before the starter. A bad start caught many of the jockeys unawares. Horses began to fall like ninepins. By the time Valentine's was reached, there were only six left standing. At the first fence of the second circuit only three horses were left standing. . . *Nickel Coin*, *Royal Tan* and *Broomfield*. The last-named fell between Becher's and the Canal Turn. *Nickel Coin* and *Royal Tan* fought it out stride by stride. The last fence saw *Royal Tan* hit it hard and falter. *Nickel Coin* went on to gain an easy win. *Derrinstown*, who had been remounted, finished third a long way behind.

There are critics who complain that the Aintree fences are too tough. It is an exacting test. Any horse that completes the double circuit of the pear-shaped course, with its thirty forbidding jumps, is not lacking in quality or courage. I have also heard it said that the early jumps are claiming more victims than in the past. Analysis of the spills-tally shows that the first ten fences in the last two Nationals have resulted in fifty horses coming down. That is a high average, a suggested cause being that the fences on Park courses are not difficult enough, with the result that horses and riders fail to survive the tougher National test. There may be an element of truth in the contention, but I feel a more likely reason is the fierce pace set in the early stages by riders who are determined to get away from the ruck and tumble.

The spacing of the jumps is not without interest. There is a gallop of a quarter of a mile to the first fence. At Becher's Brook the field is usually bunched. Then the course narrows, with an incline to the left. At one time a couple of ploughed fields, rolled flat, followed Becher's, which meant very heavy going. The abrupt turn to the left at the Canal Turn is the most exacting part of the course. Time and again I have seen a jockey hug the rail too long after taking Becher's Brook, only to find that other horses, taking the Pond Fence in the middle and slant-wise, are landing across his path and blocking the way to Valentine's Brook. It is a debatable point, but I would name Valentine's Brook as the most testing obstacle, with the landing-ground about a foot lower than that of taking-off.

If the present spanking pace is maintained from the start, the heavy early casualties might well be avoided if the first two fences were made slightly easier. It would at least give horse and

" Would my learned friend care to repeat that story on oath ? "

rider a chance to settle down. Another safeguard would be a qualifying proviso that every rider must have ridden at least ten winners under National Hunt rules before attempting to master the most difficult steeplechase in the world. As things are at present, some riders are comparatively raw. Enthusiasm and guts are not enough for the Grand National.

It is possible to be dogmatic about the rider, but we must face the fact that as regards the horses, there is no such thing as a regulation Grand National size, shape or mode of training. One winner knew the shafts of a hotel bus. Another pulled a dog-cart. A double winner changed hands for £7. Another drew a dog-cart. A famous horse was trained on the foreshore. Take last year's winner, the ten-year-old *Teal*, trained by N. Crump at Middleham, and ridden by A. P. Thompson. It was claimed that his breeder, G. Carroll, of Clonmel, once offered him for sale at £2 10s. No one took the offer, and *Teal* was eventually sold with another horse for £38 the pair. His subsequent history was that of a lady's hack, ridden by an Army officer at Catterick Camp; and owned by a Northallerton farmer, who bought him for 36 guineas. The 1952 National proved *Teal* to be a magnificent jumper and resolute fighter. He won in a very fast time—9 mins. 20⅘ secs.—only one-fifth of a second outside the record set up by *Golden Miller*. Forty-seven runners came under starter's orders. Ten finished. The conditions were vile, with a bitterly cold wind and biting rain. My choice—*Legal Joy*—came in second, and I can still feel my exasperation as I scrambled out of soaking wet clothes into a Dry Martini.

Still, that is past history. Failure can be atoned by picking the 1953 winner. At the moment there are seventy-three entries from which to choose, and a mixed bunch they look. Class horses are scarce. The two that stand out are *Mont Tremblant* and *Halloween*, though I question whether they will be at Aintree. The Cheltenham Gold Cup is more likely to be their objective. *Teal* is again in the field, only this time he will probably have an additional 10 lb. rating. He is accompanied by four stable companions—*Red Snake*, *Larry Finn*, *Menzies* and *Wot No Sun*. Of these, the last-named has been placed twice in this race. Personally, I think *Legal Joy* stands a good chance, although another entry of Miss Paget—*Shock Tactics*—looks equally promising. Northern interests are likely to centre round *Stormhead*, *Witty* and *Cardinal Error*. I admire the persistence of *Cloncarrig*, who has failed five consecutive times to finish the National course. If your tastes lie in Irish training then V. O'Brien has an impressive string in *Royal Tan*, *Early Mist*, *Knock Hard*, *Silk Cottage* and *Alberoni*. I have forgotten the tip I was given—*Saladin II*. All I know is that the venerable gentleman is trained in Switzerland, and will presumably receive top weight as he can show no form in these islands. No doubt he could win, but if he does, I am prepared to eat my race-card.

A Controversial Nomination

As I predicted a fortnight ago, Henry Cotton has been selected to captain the British team in the Ryder Cup match at Wentworth in October. The nomination was by no means a certainty, for Cotton has not always seen eye-to-eye with some of his colleagues on matters of inside politics. I am glad that such differences have been shelved, for the right man has unquestionably been chosen. As far as I know, we have not put up any statues in England to Henry Cotton. Had he been born across the Atlantic, we should probably see him now gazing with leaden eyes over some famous golf course, or holding a stony iron above the steps of the American P.G.A., or starring in a film like Ben Hogan in *Follow the Sun*. In England we take success in our stride . . . even three wins in the Open Championship, particularly when the central figure is a somewhat controversial subject.

An accurate assessment of Henry Cotton is by no means easy. Admired by many, criticised by some, censured by others, he personifies the truism that you should never trust the collective wisdom of individual ignorance. Here is a man who has had an all-absorbing ambition . . . to become the greatest golfer the game has known. To achieve such fame, shot-making had to reach a pitch of automatic perfection. He subjected himself to ice-cold concentrated self-discipline. No golfer has come so close to complete co-ordination of mind and muscle. The theory of the game has been analysed in every detail. He has fixed ideas how a golf ball should be hit. They may not be everybody's cup of tea, but the sum-total amounts to the Cotton creed. Only one thing was missing . . . the ability to eliminate error. It was here that Cotton came up against a ruthless opponent—his own temperament. The back-breaking, hand-blistering hours spent practising and experimenting were as naught in moments when his temperament refused to become akin to a feelingless automaton.

By this I do not mean that Cotton has failed. For one thing, I doubt if he or anyone else ever will succeed in the search for automatic perfection. Others have tried, but the secret has not been theirs. Cotton has touched the hem of the garment. He has come within sight of his ambition . . . that in itself is an experience known only to a few golfers.

Much uproarious laughter at the antics of two clowns from Bertram Mills Circus at the children's party at the Hyde Park Hotel in aid of the N.I.B. Sunshine Homes.

Very solemn about the whole business were Lawrence and June Levy, who won first prize for their Mexican costumes.

TO HELP BLIND BABIES

There was a wonderful children's party at the Hyde Park Hotel on January 8 in aid of the N.I.B. Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies. Organised by Miss Dorice Stainer, most of the young guests were her pupils and their friends, and although fancy dress was "optional" on the invitation cards, nearly everyone came dressed up. There were lots and lots of prizes for the best and most original costumes and, of course, a marvellous tea, very important to the younger generation.

Photographed by Swaebe.

Robert and Florian Miksa, as two up-and-coming sailors, were awarded a consolation prize.

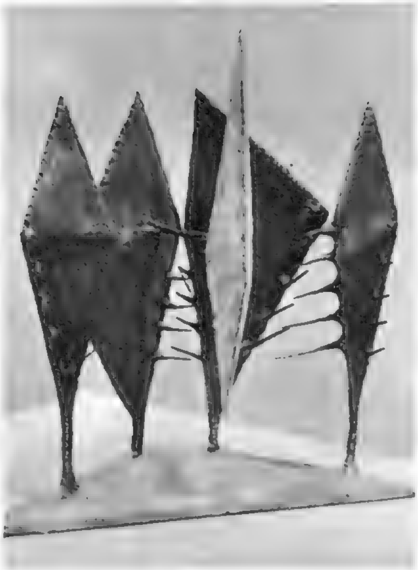
Juno, the Great Dane who collects for charity, with Gillian Stainforth.

Barry Jameson and Neville Archer watch the fancy-dress parade.

Guy Vandergucht as Little Boy Blue, with his mother.

John Mason as John Peel and Jane Street as Bo-Peep.

Lyn Brunton takes her brother Kelvin for a ride.



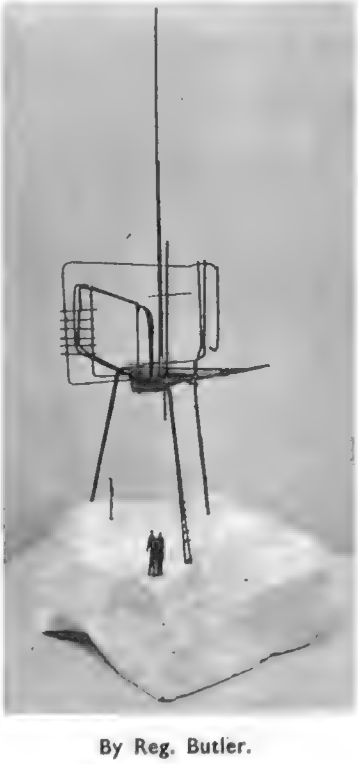
By Lynn Chadwick.

By John Stuart Osborne.

By Louise Hutchinson.

By Edward McWilliam.

By Trevor Bates.

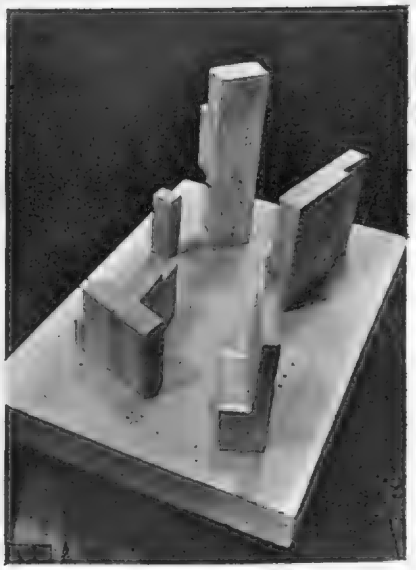


By Reg. Butler.

"THE K
POLITIC P

These twelve sculptures are the of Br
for the final of the Internationa ure c
Unknown Political Prisoner." re sc
on January 14 at a preliminary on b
Arts in the New Burlington Ga
Judging was by a panel com f Sir
National Gallery; Sir Leigh A irect
Keeper of Sculpture, of the V and
James, Art Director, Arts Coun reat
The twelve winners were pr with
by its chairman, Sir Ernest Poo Edu
old native of Edinburgh, this is a crium
recipient of the "Critics' Prize wil
to painters and sculptors.
The finalists, whose names ar bene
London next March with sculpt oth

By Arthur Wyllie.



By Eduardo Paolozzi.

By Barbara Hepworth.

By Elizabeth Frink.

By Douglas Wain Hobson.

E KNOWN
TIC PRISONER"

of British artists, the winning entrants
are competition on the theme, "The
re selected from small models shown
on by the Institute of Contemporary

f Sir Philip Hendy, Director of the
irector, and Mr. H. D. Molesworth,
nd Albert Museum ; and Mr. Philip
reat Britain.
with £25 each from the Arts Council
Eduardo Paolozzi, twenty-eight-year-
riumph. He has just become the first
will henceforth be awarded annually

beneath their work, will compete in
other countries.

By J. L. Waldron.

JAN. 7.—WEDDING. Miss Patricia Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax, second daughter of Admiral Hon. Sir Reginald and Lady Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax, married Captain N. S. U. Maude, R.M., at Holy Trinity, Brompton.

JAN. 7.—THE YOUNG ENTRY. At the Perthshire Drag Hunt's Children's Ball at the Salutation Hotel, Perth, were (standing, *l. to r.*) Graham Hunter, Patrick Wallace, Peter Robertson, and (sitting) Jean Clark, Mary McNeil, Primrose Hunter and Elizabeth Wilkie.

JAN. 13.—CARLOW HUNT BALL. A very gay event in Ireland was the Carlow Hunt Ball which was held at lovely Castlemore, lent for the occasion by Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Eustace-Duckett. (*Left*) Mrs. Olive Hall, who had been Master of the famous Carlow hounds for over thirty seasons, with the Baron de Robeck (*centre*) and Mr. Hardy Eustace-Duckett, joint-Master and huntsman to the Carlow. (*Right*) Lady Rathdonnell, Mr. Tim Derouet (*centre*), a visitor from the Essex Union Hunt, and the Marquess of Kildare.

TWO MORE AT THE CAR
Miss Sheila Blosse-Lync
Mrs. H. P. Blosse-Lync
fiancé, Mr. John Wilso
Kildare. The Blosse-Lynche

Notes and
Our Social

JAN. 8.—John Debrett, founder of the authoritative *Debrett's Peerage*, who was not born amid the ranks of the people whose pedigrees he catalogued, would have been proud to see the eminent gathering at the House of Lords to celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth with a splendid luncheon. The toast of "John Debrett and his work" was proposed by the Duke of Norfolk, Premier Earl, who praised the present-day edition for the vast amount of information contained in its 4600 pages. Sir Denys Lowson, last year's Lord Mayor of London and only a junior baronet himself, supported the toast.

Lady Rhondda, wearing a hat somewhat in the Queen Mary style, replied to the toast of the guests; other distinguished people there included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lady Violet Bonham Carter, M. Rene Massigli, the French Ambassador (Debrett's mother is said to have been a Frenchwoman), Lord Goddard the Lord Chief Justice, and Lieut.-Colonel E. M. de Brett, the great-great-grandson of the founder.

Well-known squash players were still in their familiar environment of taking exercise inside four walls, but this time more peacefully when they danced at the Squash Racquets Association second Annual Ball at the Hyde Park Hotel. Lieut.-Colonel Le Gros, chairman of the Association, welcomed the guests with Mrs. Sheila McKechnie, chairman of the Women's Association, who captained the British women's squash team when they visited America last March. In Mr. Harold Radford's party—he organised the ball—was his wife, Mr. Frank Strawson, chairman of the Jesters, a very famous squash club, and Mrs. Strawson, a former Wimbledon tennis player. It was Mr. Radford's wise idea that the ballroom should be lit by candles which spluttered attractively on every table—so much nicer than the harsh lighting unfortunately seen far too often. A couple with something to celebrate were Dr. Gavin Hildick-Smith, the British amateur squash champion, due to defend his title the following Monday, and pretty Miss Kit Richter from America; they had just become engaged.

JAN. 10.—Suffolk, too, had its big wedding, and was not going to be outdone by Edinburgh's fog; Ipswich had plenty of its own when Miss Gay Fison married Mr. Peter Strutt, son of Lord and Lady Belper, at St. Mary-le-Tower Church, which has a lovely spire rising high above the town. He was in the Coldstream Guards during the war and won the M.C. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Clavering Fison, of Stutton Hall, near Ipswich, and spent a year at the Chelsea Art School. Some brides wear their mother's wedding dresses, others their grandmother's, but this bride was different—she wore her sister's, a beautiful dress in cream brocade. Her cousin, Miss Joanna Bland, was the only

JAN. 7.—SNOW-WHITE BRIDE. At St. Nicholas Church, Pluckley, Kent, Miss Jean Dawes, a well-known point-to-point rider, was married to show-jumping expert Captain Guy Wathen.

JAN. 8.—IMPORTANT CHRISTENING. (*L. to r.*) Lord Dalkeith, Duchess of Northumberland, Duke of Buccleuch, Lady Caroline Gilmour, Mr. Ian Gilmour, Duchess of Buccleuch and (*in front*) Lady Caroline and Lady Victoria Percy at David Robert Gilmour's christening.

LOW "INDOOR MEET." only daughter of Colonel and from Co. Mayo, with her Wright, of Coolcarrigan, Co. go back to the 14th century.

MORE AT THE CARLOW HUNT BALL. Also spending a gay evening were, *left*, Lady Juliet Fitzwilliam (left), who is the youngest joint-Master of hounds in the world; she is just eighteen, and is temporarily having to forego the delights of foxhunting to be "finished" in Paris. Next to her is Mr. Derick Barton and Mrs. Barton; *Right*, Major Philip Profumo, joint-Master of the Coollattin hounds (centre), introduces Lady Rosemary Spencer Churchill, spending a hunting holiday in Ireland, to polo player Mr. Paddy McCann.

Pictures from Diary

grown-up bridesmaid; the Duchess of Norfolk, stepsister of the bridegroom, kept her eye on her daughter, Lady Sarah Fitzalan-Howard, who was one of the smaller bridesmaids. Mr. Rupert Strutt was best man to his elder brother.

Others who went on to the reception at Stutton Hall were Lord and Lady Stradbroke—he is Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk—Lady Cranbrook, Sir Ian and Lady Jacob, and Lord and Lady Cranworth, whose granddaughter, Miss Jeryl Gurdon, now Mrs. Charles Smith-Ryland, was also there with her polo-playing husband. We heard that Major and Mrs. John Tollemache were shortly moving into the family seat, Helmingham Hall, which none of the family have lived in for a very long time. Mrs. Arnoud Waller, the bride's sister, and her husband had come over specially from Holland for the wedding; he is Dutch. Major Simon Bland, Lord Dickinson, Mr. Tom Bland, Mr. Adrian and Mr. Simon House were some of the ushers. Lord and Lady Belstead had Mr. Michael Tollemache, another usher, staying with them.

JAN. 12.—Signed photographs of V.I.P.s adorn the drawing-room of the Fairbanks' house in the Boltons, which was bright and cosy for a last-minute committee meeting on the final details of the première of *The Long Memory* in aid of R.A.D.A.'s Memorial Theatre rebuilding fund. Sir Kenneth Barnes arrived with his faithful dog *Masha* on a lead, which wound round several people's legs while *Masha* investigated a rugged stone dog by the front door.

Lady Suenson-Taylor bought several tickets to be donated to nurses at St. George's Hospital; Lady Decima Moore-Guggisburg, Mrs. Henry Freedman and Dame Sybil Thorndike were also there. Mrs. Edward Sutro, a good skier herself, had just come back from Switzerland, where she had taken her two little girls for their first taste of winter sports, but she was guarded about their progress! Mrs. Roderick Newall had on a neat little sapphire-blue hat sparkling with brilliants, and Ellie, Lady McMahon, brought her granddaughter, Miss Brenda Bancroft.

Talking this evening with Mr. R. P. McDouall, we learned that the Travellers' Club, which has never before held a ball in its history (and the Club was founded in 1819), is breaking new ground for Coronation Year by running one on June 11—and as though to celebrate the occasion, a special dance floor is to be laid in the Smoking Room. As all the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers in London are honorary members of the Travellers', this should be an outstanding affair.

An invitation to a sherry party from the London branch of the Women's Engineering Society at once conjured up imaginary pictures of fearsome women in oily overalls wielding spanners, but not in the least—we found an entertaining and not-at-all-terrifying group at the

(Continued overleaf.)

JAN. 14.—AT ST. PETER'S, EATON SQUARE. Miss Bridget Mulholland, daughter of the late Hon. John Mulholland and of the Hon. Mrs. Mulholland, married Mr. G. C. Williams, son of the late Mr. H. H. Williams, and of Dolores, Lady Rendlesham.

JAN. 15.—FAMILY PORTRAIT. Sir Thomas White, Australian High Commissioner, and his youngest daughter, Judith, admire a portrait of his elder daughter Lilian, by Paul Fitzgerald, at the first Australian Artists' Association Exhibition in London.

JAN. 19.—SMART TURN-OUT. Lady Mary Baillie-Hamilton all set to move off at a meet of the Buccleuch Foxhounds at her home, Mellerstain, Berwickshire. Her father, the Earl of Haddington, puts a restraining hand to her horse's bridle.

JAN. 19.—BUT WINTER AND ROUGH WEATHER. Mr. M. I. Thomas, president of the Oxford University Boat Club, exerts all his strength to push open the Osney Lock gate to let the Oxford boat crew through on one of their practice outings.

Our Social

Society's headquarters in Grosvenor Place. The Secretary, Miss B. M. Garton, introduced Miss Cridland, President of the branch, who is an Associate of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. Sir David Pye, President of the Institute, was there, and we saw Miss G. F. Boff, who is the only woman scrap-heap owner in England—officially a "metal merchant."

JAN. 13.—The Royal Festival Hall was crammed with over 3000 people for something rather unusual; a lecture about the Severn Wildfowl Trust's expedition to Iceland by Mr. Peter Scott, painter and bird-lover, who is hon. director of the Trust. Even those not particularly interested in birds must have enjoyed the evening, for Mr. Scott drew some wonderful cartoons, including one of a highly-suspicious-looking pink-footed goose, the real subject of the lecture. There was, too, a colour film which had some amusing shots of members of the expedition, including Mr. Scott and his wife, looking somewhat top-heavy mounted on tiny Icelandic ponies.

Watching from the ceremonial box were the Icelandic Minister, M. Agnar Jonsson, and his attractive wife wearing a short black evening dress, Mrs. Peter Scott and Mr. Edwin Bayliss. Countess Reventlow brought ex-King Michael of Rumania and his wife; Sir Percy Lister, who lives near the Trust's Sanctuary on the Severn estuary, took a large party; Lord Alanbrooke, president, was with Lady Alanbrooke. Lord Geoffrey Percy, younger ornithologist brother of the Duke of Northumberland, knows all about catching wily geese for marking; he is an expert with a rocket-propelled net. Lord Dulverton, Lord Kennet and Sir Archibald Jamieson were also there, and in the stalls we saw Mr. James Fisher, another member of the expedition, and his young sons.

JAN. 14.—Another committee with a film première as its object: this time at Londonderry House, where arrangements for *Night is my Kingdom* were discussed under the able chairmanship of Lady Inchcape, all in black with an elegant gold stole. We saw Lady Pease, Lady Inchcape's mother, very young-looking in a marvellous fur coat, Lady Auriol Vaughan, Miss Susan Warren Pearl, and Miss Sheila Campbell-Walter, younger sister of the better-known Fiona. The première is planned for February 5, and is in aid of the United Appeal for the Blind.

Later a very young and lively crowd invaded Grosvenor House for the Stowe Pineapple Ball, scarcely a parent or chaperone to be seen. Stowe started running a club for boys on the site of a hotel in Paddington called The Pineapple in 1928, and proceeds of the ball were for this club. The Stowe boys visit it during term time and members of the club have the

JAN. 17.—THE LORD MAYOR PAYS HOMAGE. Sir Rupert de la Bère kneels in homage to a very young Queen Elizabeth, seven-year-old Fiona Crichton, at the Lord Mayor's Fancy Dress Party at the Mansion House.

JAN. 17.—EYES LEFT! Something catches the attention of Miss Una Slim, daughter of Field Marshal Sir William and Lady Slim, and Captain Nigel Frazer, Grenadier Guards, as they leave the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy after their wedding.

JAN. 19.—COMMITTEE MEMBERS. The Hon. Katherine Smith and Lady Bridget Clark were at a committee meeting to discuss arrangements for the Golden Cage Ball.

JAN. 20.—SURPRISE ROYAL VISIT. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret leaving an antique shop in St. Andrews Street, Cambridge, when they paid a surprise visit from Sandringham.

JAN. 20.—A CLOWN MEETS A PRINCE. Prince William of Gloucester shakes hands with the check-suited clown, Alby Austin, and veteran Percy Huxter when he went to Bertram Mills' Circus at Olympia.

Diary (contd.)

un of going down to Stowe to play matches against the school. Some of these chaps, smartly got up in white with large pineapples appliquéd to their fronts, acted as programme-sellers. An efficiently run tombola provided lots of amusement, prizes varied from packets of soap flakes to golf clubs and alarm clocks. Mr. Robin Hutchison was examining the natty pullover he had just won, watched by his sister, Miss Rosie Hutchison, Mr. David Higham, Mr. John Fountaine, a busy farmer taking time off to have a brief glimpse of the bright lights, Miss Ann Brocklebank and Miss Melodie Liscombe. Mr. Peter Morrison was the only one not an old Stoic at that table; he hesitated to tell of the delights of Rugby. Miss Una Slim, daughter of Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, looked very happy dancing with her fiancé, Captain Nigel Frazer, enjoying a last night out before their wedding three days later. Captain John Slim, her brother, decided that he'd better give her the table cloth and napkins he won off the tombola for her bottom drawer. Major A. B. Clifford and Mr. Bruce Whineray were in good form; Miss Octavia Andreae and Miss Helena Bridgeman were two of many decorous dancers. The good old Eightsome Reel made its appearance soon after midnight, seen doing it expertly were Miss Iona Royce-Tomkin and Mr. Ian Graham, Lord Alistair Graham's son, and for the Gay Gordons, Miss Belinda Goldsmith assisted the efforts of the band with a spirited accompaniment on a tin whistle.

JAN. 15.—There was a tremendous crowd at the English-Speaking Union's farewell reception for Mr. Walter Gifford, American Ambassador, and Mrs. Gifford, due to return home to America next week. The guests, which included many High Commissioners and their wives, thronged through the seemingly endless suite of reception rooms, which smelt quite springlike with vases of white lilac and mimosa. Sir Clive Baillieu, chairman of the English-Speaking Union, who received a barony in the New Year Honours, was greeting everyone with Lady Baillieu; Lord Salisbury, Lord and Lady Knollys and Sir Richard and Lady Burbidge were there; Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the Minister of State, and his wife arrived late. Others we saw included Lady Worsley, who is chairman of the Victoria League, wearing a leopard coat, Lady Ashley Cooper, Lady Salisbury talking to Mrs. Julius Holmes, and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Butler just back from New Zealand.

JAN. 15.—We certainly expected Coronation Year to get busy with parties—but not quite so busy as at one given in Chelsea by Mr. David Rutland and Mr. Gerry Ackroyd, where the rooms became so crowded that at one stage the servants had to abandon their efforts at handing round drinks.

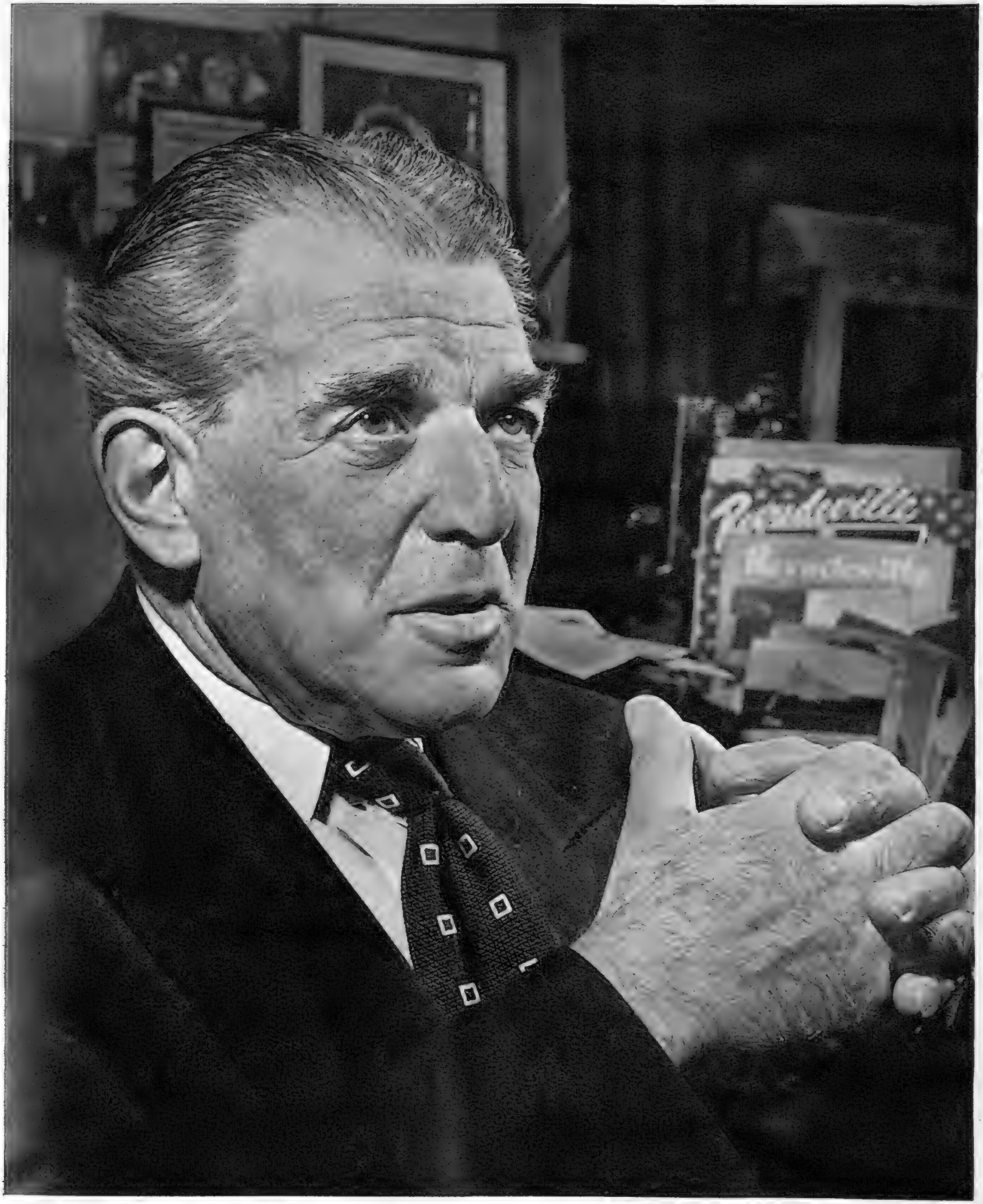
WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

(Right)

THIS R.S.M. : For calling attention to the Voice of Brit(t)ain.
At Mons Barracks, Aldershot, senior R.S.M. Ronald Brittain is in fine voice for his second ceremonial Coronation—he was R.S.M. of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards which supplied a Guard of Honour outside Westminster Abbey at the Coronation of King George VI.

(Below.)

BILL ERICKSON : For remaining club champion even under difficulty.
In an obstacle tennis tournament at Nyack, N.Y., competitors were fitted with impediments according to their degrees of skill. Despite the planners' best intentions to handicap the strong and favour the weak, the winners turned out to be the usual champions.



Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by George Konig.

VIVIAN VAN DAMM—

—a majority . . .

. . . on February 4, the Windmill ("We Never Closed") Theatre will celebrate its twenty-first anniversary of Non-Stop Revue. To commemorate the occasion, the staff and members of the company will present their owner-manager-producer, Mr. Vivian Van Damm, with his portrait in oils. The son of a lawyer, he originally trained for the Bar, but became attracted to commerce and can now surely claim to have started more youngsters on the stairway to fame than any other impresario. Mr. Van Damm spends as much of his time as possible at his Angmering home and, whenever he is able, indulges his fondness for flying—a hobby he shares with his wife and three daughters.

★ AT THE CINEMA ★

with C. A. LEJEUNE

The Prisoner of Zenda

(Empire)

THREE rousing cheers for *The Prisoner of Zenda* ! It would seem difficult to go really wrong with a dramatised version of this smashing romance, but as Hollywood has told us a hundred times in various ways, it has never hesitated to essay the difficult.

So far as I can determine from my records, this is the fifth screen version of Anthony Hope's novel, and I don't recall being more pleased with any other. This film *feels* like the book; although it differs from it in detail and necessarily cuts and embellishes, all the essentials of the plot are there, from Rudolf Rassendyll's first meeting with his royal counterpart in the hunting lodge, to the business of Jacob's ladder, and the brief words of parting at the frontier.

Stewart Granger in the dual rôle last played by Ronald Coleman, James Mason as the dare-devil Rupert of Hentzau (a bit older than the laughing lad of the book, but fine in his own style), and Deborah Kerr as Princess Flavia (how exquisite she looks in that white lace gown over the smoky blue !) seem admirably accommodated. The Technicolor is tactful, the action lively, and the new dialogue, insinuated amongst the old, a very pretty piece of dovetailing. Taking it all in all, and being completely candid, I don't think I've enjoyed myself so much at the pictures for years.

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA—the Coronation Ball scene : Rudolf Rassendyll (Stewart Granger), the adventurer in the guise of King Rudolf V., waltzes in the centre of the ballroom with Princess Flavia (Deborah Kerr).

Decameron Nights

(Odeon, Marble Arch)

I WAS brought up to believe that Boccaccio's *Decameron* was one of the classics that nice people of the present century ought to know about but shouldn't read; although it was quite all right for Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Molière, Dryden, Keats, Alfred Lord Tennyson and others who not only read the work but brazenly pinched from it, without so much as a thank-you or by-your-leave.

So I went to see *Decameron Nights* expecting something remarkably saucy. I should have known better. Although these stories-within-a-story are mainly concerned with the intrigues and pleasures of the bedchamber, they are presented in a way that could hardly bring a blush of shame to the cheek of the youngest girl at St. Trinian's.

The film is a full-dress, Technicolor charade about a youth named Boccaccio, who follows his proud flame Fiametta to the rural women's hostel where she has sought refuge from a siege in the city, and worrits her into tractability by telling her lots and lots of love-stories.

Decameron Nights was shot in England and in Italy, with Hollywood stars Louis Jourdan and Joan Fontaine (we saw them together last in *Letter to an Unknown Woman*) as the hero and heroine of each episode. One takes place aboard a pirate ship; one in Italy; one in Morocco. The colour is fine, and somebody in the art department has plainly put in a lot of research on mediæval Italian painting.

The saddest feature of the film, perhaps, is the condemnation of Godfrey Tearle, after all his years of noble service to the theatre, to the position of a comic cuckold. The naughtiest thing about it, almost certainly, is the title. *Decameron* means something. It means ten days; the space of time allotted by Boccaccio to his stories. *Decameron Nights* is surely a contradiction in terms. It hints at secrecy and sauciness; but for the life of me I can't see that it *means* anything at all.

My Cousin Rachel

(Odeon, Leicester Square)

JOAN FONTAINE'S talented and beautiful sister, Olivia de Havilland (and how odd it is to catch the family likeness at certain angles !), appears with lovely composure in *My Cousin Rachel*, adapted from Daphne du Maurier's popular novel.

The story, as you may recall, is about an English gentleman of the last century, who has reason to suspect that his guardian has been poisoned by a young wife, half-Italian. Bent on revenge, he meets the wife, falls passionately in love with her, wavers to and fro between adoration and doubt, and never does determine whether his Rachel with the Mona Lisa smile is an angel or a devil.

The note of the film is sombre, and the ending tragic, but the whole thing grips the attention, production has more than a touch of class, and the settings in a Cornish mansion are handsome to see. Olivia de Havilland is partnered by Richard Burton, a young British stage actor making his Hollywood début. His extraordinary resemblance to Laurence Olivier, combined with the Du Maurier dialogue style and the mystery plot, attaches *My Cousin Rachel* very firmly to memories of *Rebecca*. Forecasters of film favourites might do well to keep their eyes on Richard Burton. I shall be surprised if we don't see a lot more of him some day.

Ruby Gentry

(London Pavilion)

THE rôle played by Jennifer Jones in *Ruby Gentry* begins as a wildcat Paulette Goddard sort of part, turns into the streamlined Joan Crawford type, and ends as genuine Jones mudlark, of the kind the actress enjoyed in *Duel in the Sun* (only that, of course, was not mud, but something resembling tomato ketchup).

Ruby Gentry was born on the wrong side of the tracks in the North Carolina swamplands, and neither the Southern aristocracy, nor 20th Century-Fox's screen-writers, ever allow her to forget it. She is described as "wild, uninhibited, passionate, tempestuous, warm-heartedly generous and cruelly vindictive." In fact, she 's quite a girl, and when she can't get what she wants, she proceeds to "wreck a whole town . . . ! sin by sin . . . ! man by man !"

The thing she wants most is Boake Tackman (Charlton Heston), an aristocrat who is trying to reclaim the land his idle, spendthrift ancestors have allowed to relapse into salt-marsh. But Boake, although far from averse from tumbling in the long grass with Ruby, intends to marry, and does marry, a gentlewoman named Tracy, who "has brains and breeding."

This betrayal drives Ruby straight into wedlock with one Jim Gentry, a millionaire widower. But it does little good to her social status. In spite of their esteem for dear old Jim, and the fact that they all seem to be embarrassingly in debt to him, the snobbish citizens of North Carolina stay away from poor Ruby's parties by the dozen. To make matters worse, Jim Gentry is careless enough to drown himself while sailing alone with his wife, and these well-bred characters make no secret of their suspicion she has murdered him.

This is the point at which the now rich and vengeful Ruby proceeds to wreck the town. She indulges in an orgy of dispossessing and foreclosing, reserving her most satisfying revenge for Boake, who has borrowed money from the late Jim Gentry for pumps to drain his land. Ruby stops the pumps. Then she puts on a black sweater with a choker necklet, diamond earrings, and dark glasses, and sits like a goddess in her car, chain-smoking, while the swamp-water floods back to drown the young tobacco.

No experienced picturegoer will imagine this to be the end. Retribution has to come, and I must say it comes from an unexpected and dramatic source. The mudlark ending is the best thing in the film; which isn't saying very much for it.

Women of Twilight

(Plaza)

THE British *Women of Twilight* suggests a companion piece to *No Room at the Inn*. Once again Freda Jackson grimly presides over a dubious establishment. This time she appears as the proprietress of a London boarding-house for unmarried mothers, who keeps herself in reasonable comfort by exploiting the fears and frailties of these young women, while not overlooking the possibilities of blackmail, baby-farming, and a back-garden handy for the disposal of tiny bodies.

Nobody could call *Women of Twilight* a *cheerful* film, nor is it particularly well made. But there's always a certain fascination in watching the overthrow of a monster. I don't think I could have left the theatre until I was sure the police were on to this one. The cast, of course, is predominantly female, and includes (besides Miss Jackson) Rene Ray, Lois Maxwell, Joan Dowling, Vida Hope, and Dora Bryan (bless her broad, funny face !).

" TURN THE KEY SOFTLY "

Girl with a future in films is twenty-year-old Joan Collins, whose vitality and glamour bring her more requests for pin-up pictures from the Forces overseas than any other British actress. She has her first starring role in the Chiltern Films production *Turn the Key Softly*, produced by Maurice Cowan for the J. Arthur Rank Organisation, and due for release early this year.

A happy group at the table of Maj
hunt, are, *l. to r.*, Mr. and Mr
Mrs. Gillam, Mr. Broo

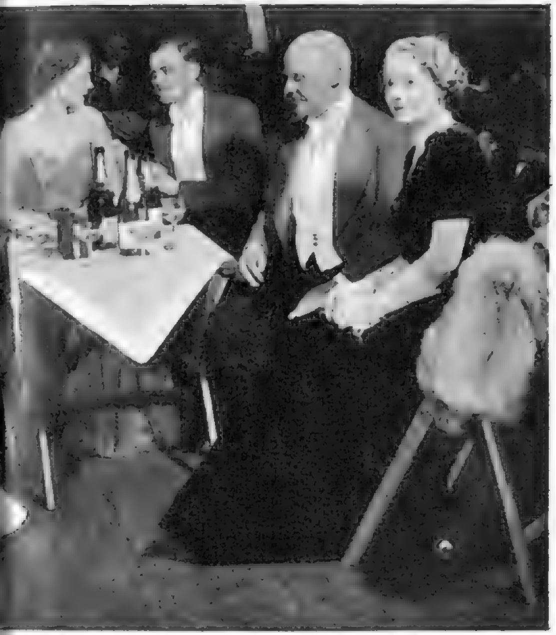
A good time is obviously being had by all, in this view of the beautiful Ballroom at York's Georgian Assembly Rooms, where the York and Ainsty North Hunt were holding their annual ball. These finely-proportioned rooms with their stately Corinthian columns are an excellent example of the Earl of Burlington's architecture.

Two guests from Malton dancing together are Mr. J. A. Russell and his very pretty wife

Executing an intricate dance-step are Miss Barbara Lloyd and Mr. Robin Barran.

In happy mood, Mrs. K. Cameron and Mr. Guy Beadon enjoy their dance.

Miss Wanda Forsyth-Torrest and Mr. Johnny Ropner took their dancing more seriously



L. B. Holliday, M.F.H. of the York and Ainsty North
Richard Blackwell, Mrs. and Mr. Ligert Wood,
Holliday and Major and Mrs. L. B. Holliday.

Deep in conversation with their friends, these prettily-dressed girls make a charming picture. From *l. to r.*, Mr. Geoffrey Armitage, Miss Rosemary Elliott-Smith, Miss June Claye, Mr. Michael Wilson, Miss Elizabeth Radley, Mrs. and Mr. Malcolm Snowden.

THE YORK AND AINSTY NORTH HUNT BALL

On January 9, the York and Ainsty North Hunt held their annual Ball at York city's Georgian Assembly Rooms, which were charmingly decorated for the occasion by Miss Rhodes, Mrs. Machin and Miss Ingram. The York and Ainsty hounds were founded early in the nineteenth century and was divided in 1929 into North and South, but the two hunts still hold a joint point-to-point.

Colonel S. Rhodes and his sister, Miss Katherine Rhodes, were joint organisers of the Ball, ably supported by Lady Barran, Lady Mowbray and Stourton, Lady Celia Milnes-Coates, Lady Lawson-Tancred, Mrs. G. Aykroyd, Mrs. Greenwood, Mrs. Milburn, Mrs. Whateley-Thompson, Mrs. C. Brown, Mrs. L. B. Holliday and Mrs. F. E. Rhodes.

There were a number of guests from the neighbouring hunts centred on York. The colourful dresses of the ladies and the prevalence of hunting pink lent the occasion a delightful air of gay profusion.

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by George Konig.

The Ball was voted a really huge success, and this group at the champagne bar obviously subscribe to the general opinion. From *l. to r.*, Mr. De Notte, Mrs. Lyon, Commander M. A. McMullen, R.N., Mrs. Laird McGregor, Mrs. G. Armitage, Mrs. De Notte and Lieut.-Cdr. P. Bell, R.N.

L. to r., Mrs. and Col. H. C. Benson, Capt. Archie Farrow, Col. S. Rhodes, Mr. W. Brown, Miss Biddy Coates, Mrs. F. W. Ward, Miss Dagny Rose, Col. H. Rhodes (*seated*), Hunt Sec. Mr. W. Blake and Col. F. W. Ward.

L. to r., Miss Ethne Garnett, Mr. Michael Hield, Mr. P. Butler, Miss Jennifer New, Mr. Martin Jones, Miss Angela Sagar-Musgrave, Mr. J. Butler, Miss Patricia O'Callaghan, Mr. Robin Sagar-Musgrave and Miss Dilys Jones.

TALKING OF TELEVISION

By CYRIL BUTCHER

THE QUESTION OF THE SCRIPT

IT is some time ago since we first discussed the newly-formed Script Department under Basil Bartlett, at Lime Grove. At the time, we hailed it as a wonderful idea and *au fond* we still do.

If television's enormous appetite, of well over 100 plays a year, is to be satisfied, and if the 2000-odd manuscripts which are submitted over the twelve months are to be thoroughly vetted, it obviously requires a separate organisation dealing with nothing else. It is also impossible to leave the task of adapting stage plays, film scenarios or short stories for television, to the producers—they simply haven't time to do the job thoroughly.

At the same time there is a grave disadvantage in passing a work of art through the machinery of an organisation, however brilliantly staffed or well-meaning. It is very apt to become sterile in the process.

Let us take a recent example and discuss it. *The Commonplace Heart* began its career as a short story by Storm Jameson. We cannot claim to have read it, but it is obviously a sensitive tale of a middle-aged man, rich, kind and slightly ridiculous, who falls in love with a young girl, of the up-and-doing type. The girl's mother tries to force her into a marriage with him for reasons not unconnected with finance. There is also a young Canadian Air Force officer who falls in love with the girl and *vice versa*. All right; not a new story, but none the worse for that. It should make a good play.

Now at the very least the story passed through the hands of Michael Barry, the head of Television Drama, and Basil Bartlett. It was then given to Nigel Kneale and George Kerr, expert script-writers who know the technique of television thoroughly, to turn into a shooting script in play form. This was finally handed to John Fernald to produce. So, in its formative stage, the play became the brain-child of six different people. Six is a reasonably-sized committee, and what sort of work of art is a committee going to produce?

It will be well-tailored, no rough edges anywhere, no loose ends left lying about, the dialogue will be a model of succinctness and the construction virtually perfect. But it will probably have as much life about it as the average Government White Paper.

Take any play by Shakespeare, Chehov, Ibsen or Coward. Their basic strength lies in the personality of the author. Why is any film by Carol Reed or Alfred Hitchcock always more exciting than one which is the product of a long string of credits? Because it bears the stamp of the director's personality.

In *The Commonplace Heart* all personality had been polished out of the script and the initial passion which inspired the story lost in its passage through the sausage machine. For this reason we found the play flat and dull, and no doubt it was the reason why the cast dutifully went through their paces without once managing to bring their characters to life. Michael Hordern tried valiantly to create another Lob out of the main part, but the stuff just wasn't there to do it with.

In spite of this, we still hold that the Script Department is a wonderful idea. But we must urge Messrs. Barry and Bartlett to be very, very careful that the plays with which it deals are not killed in the "Committee Stage." Wherever possible they should insist that the original author does the rewriting or adapting.

* * *

Our grouse with George R. Foa, television's opera producer, is that he is inconsistent. He will do one production, like that of *Faust*, with taste and imagination, and then his imagery will desert him with the dismal result of *Hansel and Gretel*. Humperdinck's opera should be ideally suited to television. It is intimate and gives scope for endless imagination; it has charm, innocence and simplicity; there is magic and there is terror. But apparently Mr. Foa's fantasy is not up to fairy-tale standard.

He might well have turned to Walt Disney for inspiration. Disney would have removed the opera far from the realms of reality. The mighty forest would have been seething with enchanting little creatures to divert us, while Hansel and Gretel were singing through the delightful score. The honey-cake house would have made the mouth water and the witch would have struck terror to the heart. Mr. Foa gave us a very real Hansel and Gretel in the persons of Gertrude Holt and Marion Studholme, who sang and acted well.

But, in the fierce lighting in which they were bathed, they could scarcely convince us that they were young children. The forest was about as sinister as the back garden of a house in Upper Ealing. To represent it, designer, Stephen Bundy, produced an astonishing mixture of rather wobbly cut-outs and what must have been the last few branches torn off the local laurel bushes.

What he used to represent the tempting witch's house was less clear, but we found the effect amateurish and somewhat laughable. Poor Sheila Rex, as the witch, never had a chance. She sang efficiently, but someone had dressed her up in a costume that made her look like Mrs. Mop wearing a black dunce's cap. It did not help her to strike terror!

Pat Kirkwood will re-create Marie Lloyd in "Passing Show," a new programme based on the life of the old music-hall star, to be televised next month.

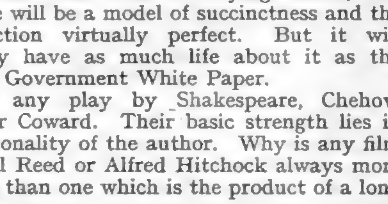
One final point, which may not be conductor Charles Mackerras's fault or even Mr. Foa's. *Hansel and Gretel* is scored for a sizeable orchestra. But the sounds coming from the studio orchestra on this occasion led us to presume that it was composed of "one of each." It won't do.

The second edition of *Down You Go* was certainly better done, but pardon our yawn. Can't someone think of something more amusing?

The Henry Hall show *Face the Music* broke no new ground as regards pattern. Like any other show, it was a bit of chit-chat, then a musical number, then more chit-chat, then a guest artist, and so on. But it did have one advantage, and that was in the person of Henry Hall, who has that unfailing dry charm. We would advise that the next programme is designed much more round Mr. Hall instead of relegating him to the position of a rather diffident *compère*.

We apologise for our irascibility, but we cannot pass by one of the silliest plays we have ever seen on television. Described as a comedy thriller and called *Whistling in the Dark* (by Laurence Gross and Edward Childs Carpenter), it gave us not a thrill and not a smile. And why the B.B.C. should choose this tawdry gangster play for peak family viewing beats us —particularly when this type of violent subject is being so attacked in the cinema.

Introducing . . .



IX. ERIC ROBINSON

ONE day, several years ago, we were discussing the late Sir Henry Wood with the late Constant Lambert. Lambert summed up the genial, bearded maestro thus: "Henry Wood may not be the most inspired artist, but he is an absolutely first-rate musical craftsman. If I was unable to conduct a new work of mine, I would rather he gave the first performance than anybody else. It would be a thoroughly workmanlike job."

We have always felt the same about Eric Robinson. We beg to doubt that the torch of pure music burns fiercely in his soul. If it did, he would not have built up the considerable reputation of Eric Robinson. That reputation is the result of always being "on the ball" whether he is conducting opera, jazz, ballet, musical comedy, variety or be-bop. He is a great musical craftsman and tackles each assignment with the same thoroughness and knowledge of his job. Under his baton an orchestra may not become inspired, but it will play the score accurately, as written. Artists whom he accompanies may not find the fire of a Beecham, but they know that Robinson will stay with them without a falter.

Personally he is a cosy, easy companion: no conceit, no malice and no temperament. If you have a musical problem he will try and sort it out for you and, like as not, succeed. He is never too busy to bother with you, or too proud to talk to you, whoever you are.

He doesn't talk much about himself, though occasionally you can draw him out about his experiences as a violinist in the wireless orchestra in the old Savoy Hill days, or as manager of the Blue Rockets Dance Orchestra while he was in the Army. He'll talk about cricket, Venetian glass and gardening (strictly as a beholder). But he is happiest about music and television. He loves them both.

Watching Brief

TO-NIGHT (January 28) you will be able to see a not often done ballet, *Carnival*, danced by that charming company of youngsters the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. The music, of course, is by Schumann and the orchestra will be conducted by John Lanchberry. Principal dancers are Elaine Fifield, Pirmin Trecu and David Poole.

* * *

More ballet on February 2, when there is the third of the latest *Ballet for Beginners* programmes. This will concentrate on the choreography of Walter Gore, one of the dancing world's more intriguing personalities.

* * *

Plays? Well there is one of those "scientific" dramas *Number Three*, by Charles Irving, on February 1 and 5. It has Raymond Huntley, Ursula Howells and Jack Watling in the leads and a highly atomic plot. Stephen Harrison produces.

* * *

Or if you like your drama with an Irish flavour, there is *The Gentle Maiden*, by Donal Giltinan, who is a playwright of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. In the way Irish plays have it swings between comedy and drama. There is a large cast and will be produced by Andrew Osborn. The date is February 3.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO

by Norah Owen

Light tweed makes this suit by Frederick Starke, with its slim skirt and loose jacket, fastening with a scarf-effect, fringe-trimmed. The price is about £22 10s. from the Model Suit Department, Harrods, and McDonalds, Glasgow. The large white felt hat is by Hugh Beresford, from Swan and Edgar.

WHEN SPRING IS IN THE AIR . . .

Even in mid-winter the thought of Spring days ahead makes us suit-conscious, and we give in the following pages a selection of suits that can be bought ready-to-wear for the first real days of Spring, or to wear now in countries with warmer climates than our own. The pictures were taken at London Airport, beside British European Airways' Elizabethan airliners, which are aptly named for this Coronation year.

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Keith Ewart.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (*continued*)

WHEN SPRING IS IN THE AIR . . .

Left : A neatly-tailored boxy suit for town or country. The straight jacket has a velvet collar and single-breasted buttoning, and is worn with a slim skirt and a long jersey top. By Matita, its price is in the region of 30 gns. from Liberty, London, and Bon Marché, Liverpool. The close-fitting melussine hat is from Ruby Carel, 6, Grosvenor Street.

Below : The long, loose jacket line with a slim skirt is shown in this easily-fitting suit, ideal for travelling, in tweed in confetti shades. By Jacqmar, it costs approximately 25 gns. from 16, Grosvenor Street, London, and Renee Meneely, Belfast. The little felt hat is from Ruby Carel.

A sleek suit for town and more formal occasions. In billiard-green barathea, braid-bound with black, styled in classic simplicity, with a neat waist and slim skirt. By Dorville, £26 5s. from Jay's, London, and McDonalds, Glasgow. The green velvet close-fitting turban hat, trimmed with jersey, is from Ruby Carel.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO *(continued)*

WHEN SPRING IS IN THE AIR . . .

Left ; A businesslike little suit which is very wearable for the country, or early Spring days in town. The skirt is slim, the jacket has a nipped, tucked waist and buttons high to a neat collar. In an attractive type of Donegal tweed, it costs only 8½ gns. By Simon Massey, from Dickins and Jones, London, and John Moses, Newcastle.

Below ; Grey still remains a favourite Spring colour, this year as ever. This classic suit in grey, spotted with white, with trimming in the reverse, is fresh and young-looking. By Brenner, 10 gns., from Fenwick's, London, and Lewis Lewis, Swansea. The yellow hat, sequin-trimmed, is a Hugh Beresford model from Swan and Edgar.

ELEGANT ECONOMY

For really warm Spring days, nothing could be gayer for the young and slim than this little bolero-suit in grey flannel. With a straight skirt, the rib-length jacket is in plain and spotted material, the spots being obtainable in a wide range of pastel shades. The very reasonable price of this suit, by Mornessa, is only £4 17s. 11d., from Dickins and Jones, London ; Broadbent and Turner, Warrington ; and Farmer's, Nottingham. The aircraft being serviced in the background is the one which was used by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Kent on their recent return flight to England.

FABULOUS AND FAIR

THIS year, with the crowning of a Queen, there is a return to real femininity in make-up. Against the brilliance of fine jewellery, there is the contrast of pale, cream-smooth skins, delicately tinted, softly feminine, emphasized with lipstick and rouge in pinks, dark or pale, inspired by the many colours of the rose, which this year is the symbol of female beauty.

Choose from the following preparations from well-known makers :

Elizabeth Arden's " Rose Mist " ; " Sky Blue Pink " and " Desert Pink " for lipstick and rouge ; her " Dusty Pink " for nail lacquer.

Charles of the Ritz's " Bright Pink " lipstick and cream-rouge.

Dorothy Gray's " Regalia Rose " lipstick and cream-rouge. (In the shops from March onwards.)

Innoxa's new shades in their powder range, " Pink Pearl " and " Rose Petal."

Coty's lipstick, cream and powder rouge in " Rose Mode " and " Coral Pink."

Atkinson's " Polka Pink " lipstick, worn with " First Blush " powder-rouge.

Revlon's " Paint the Town Pink " indelible cream lipstick and nail varnish.

Left : Fine diamonds, beautifully arranged, make up this necklace and delicate ear-rings. From Mappin and Webb, London.

To display bracelets and rings hands must be smooth and white.

Dorothy Gray's " Cellogen Hand Cream with Hormones " is a home hand-treatment which has instantaneous results, particularly for hands which have had rough treatment. Light and fragrant, it is green in colour, immediately counteracting redness. Price 9s. 2d., and 16s. 8d.

Cyclax give a Lemon Oil Hand Treatment in their Salon. 12s. 6d. a treatment, £3 2s. 6d. for a course of six.

Right ; A fabulously-wrought bracelet in diamonds, with a large, perfect solitaire diamond ring. From the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company, London.

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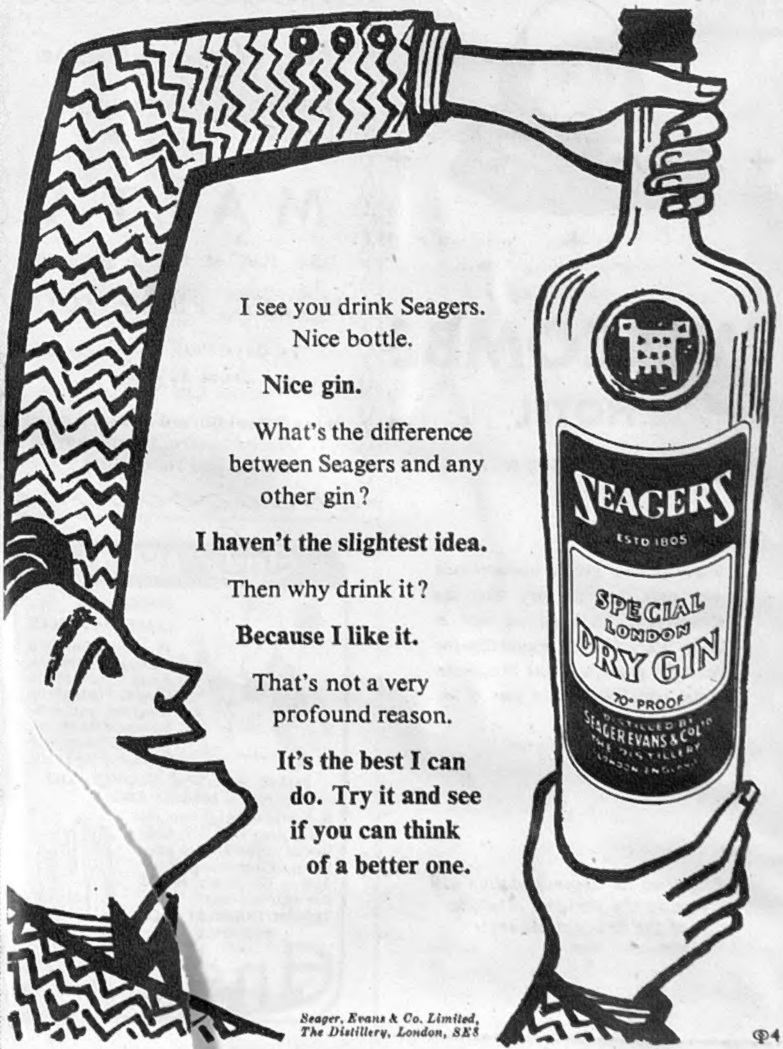

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